

Service Delivery for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity: In-Year Briefing

Briefing Paper by the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

1. Introduction

This mid-year report for Scrutiny covers the functions of Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (CoPHEP), i.e. the service areas of Communities (Head of Service: Simon Kitchen), Public Health (Director of Public Health: Virginia Pearson), Planning, Transportation and Environment (Head of Service: Dave Black) and Economy, Enterprise and Skills (Head of Service: Keri Denton).

2. Planning, Transportation and Environment - Head of Service: Dave Black

Key activities in flood risk resilience is completion of schemes focused on improved protection at Ivybidge, Sidmouth, Exeter, Stokeinteignhead combined with Natural Flood Risk Management and Property Level Resilience. The statutory duty for sustainable drainage requires ongoing dialogue with numerous stakeholders and to assist this a well-attended workshop took place.

The School Place Planning Team have delivered (or onsite) several expansion projects plus new schools at Charlton Lodge and Okehampton. In addition, a programme is emerging to provide additional Special Schools places which builds on the current investment strategy. Alongside their regulatory function the Planning Team are actively working on the delivery of Sherford, Cranbrook, South West Exeter and the Exeter joint local plan.

Promoting sustainable travel and access to the countryside aims to improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles. New cycle routes have been delivered (or onsite) in Newton Abbot, Exeter and the Wray Valley Trail. In addition, there continues to be a programme of independent travel training for children with special needs.

The declaration of a Climate Emergency has resulted in the formation of a strategic-level forum of chief executives and directors who agreed to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group who are supported by a project team of experts.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/devon-climate-emergency>

We continue to work with the Local Nature Partnership and other partners for the promotion and sustainability of Devon's Natural Capital. Using the Historic Environment Record the Historic Environment team provide essential input to the planning system. They are also proactive in public engagement, events have taken place in Ippplepen, Sherford, Thorverton and Okehampton.

The North Devon Link project and the A382 improvement schemes are key areas where there are planned major improvements to connectivity. These schemes are managed by the combined resources of the Planning and Environment team and Engineering Design Group. Recent planning applications have included a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

There are a series of initiatives focused on driver and cyclist use of the road network that are aimed at improving road safety. Examples of this are "Bikeability" and "Learn to Live" initiatives where we work with partners to promote a greater recognition of the potential hazards of driving to younger cyclists and drivers.

The Transport Coordination team is managing a number of pressures on delivery of passenger transport provision, examples are the introduction of new legislation and reduction in use of concessionary fares. There are a number of strands to the business involving financially supporting local bus services, daily transport of 14,500 school children, adult and child social care transport and working with NHS for non-emergency patient transport.

3. Communities - Head of Service: Simon Kitchen

The Communities team has responsibilities to deliver four key areas of the Council's duties:

- commissioning of Devon's youth services, support around domestic and sexual violence and library and heritage services;
- community safety and co-ordination of related work and partnerships; and statutory co-ordination to preventing extremism and radicalisation;
- community development across the county and its links to the Council's priorities; and
- work to support a range of communities including the Armed Forces Covenant partnership; the resettlement of Syrian families, gypsies and travellers and through Active Devon accessing and increasing physical activity across the County.

In May the Council launched two new funding streams, alongside its existing Crowdfund Devon pilot, to support and facilitate community and voluntary work across Devon.

The **Doing What Matters** scheme (Grants of £5k to £20k) has been developed in line with the Council's priorities, with a focus this year on loneliness and isolation. The Council has welcomed applications which help:

- to build relationships and connections locally, across all age groups
- people become more physically active
- people take notice of their local environment
- to develop opportunities for culture, creativity or learning
- to support giving across local people and communities, including volunteering
- to make people feel safer locally.

From a standing start the Council has received a high number of enquiries and applications, with over £150k already provisionally allocated to applications; this alongside an additional £55k of matched funding from bidders; clearly helping the Council's funding go further.

The **Making the Connection** scheme provides small, one-off non-repeatable, grants of up to £300 to support community-led ideas and initiatives across Devon. Just over 50% of the fund has already been allocated to a wide range of small community-led initiatives across the County.

Crowdfund Devon, our nationally leading pilot continues to grow and develop, with Torbay Council recently requesting to join the Council's six other District Council and Police partners. For every Crowdfund Devon pound that DCC has invested thus far, £6.13 was added by the wider crowd – a 613% amplification. While recognising that Crowdfunding is one of several funding options, and may not be suitable for all projects, some Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations remain slow to explore crowdfunding and therefore the Council will need to continue to communicate the value of this fund and way of working.

More details on all the projects that we have helped to fund under the pilot can be viewed here: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/user/devon-county-council/profile>.

As has previously been discussed at this committee, the Council's approach to libraries will be the subject of an innovative strategy development over the next year as it considers an exciting and long-term future for libraries in Devon.

The Council is currently in the middle of a procurement process for its Youth Service based around an ambitious set of requirements for the next five years. This will be both informing and informed by an emerging, positive national landscape looking to invest in and invigorate youth services and practice.

The Council is leading work in partnership to consider emerging threats around extremism and wider forms of exploitation. The team has led the development of an online exploitation toolkit to help those working around vulnerable people across agencies to understand the signs of exploitation and provide advice and support to address concerns.

Active Devon continues its great work as a community-focused, non-profit organisation (hosted by DCC) dedicated to inspiring and supporting Devon to be active. Active Devon works closely with its key funder Sport England including the current Local Delivery Pilot (one of 12 in the Country) around Greater Exeter.

Local work to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence continues to receive national interest for its innovation and impact including the 'Bystander' initiative, recently promoted and launched by Dame Vera Baird, Victims Commissioner for England and Wales. At the same time, the Council is working with both the Safer Devon Partnership and Devon Children and Families Partnership to explore how we can further strengthen our work in this area, given there appears to be no reduction in demand for services.

4. Public Health - Chief Officer/Head of Service: Virginia Pearson

The Public Health team work has four main responsibilities and some of the current work this year includes:

Public Health Intelligence and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

With the support of the Public Health team, the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board has produced a new **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy** entitled 'Healthy and Happy Communities' which sets priorities for local partners in relation to health, care and wellbeing from 2020 to 2025. The strategy was the result of comprehensive engagement with board members and local organisations, including stakeholder conferences, workshops, an online public consultation and focus group sessions with local groups including young people, disabled people, deaf people, LGBTQ+ communities, BME groups and people with learning disabilities. The board's vision for 2020 to 2025 is focused on reducing health inequalities and making health outcomes amongst the best in the world. Specific priorities relate to reducing health inequalities by creating opportunities for all through economic growth and education; establishing health, safe, strong and sustainable communities; having a specific focus on mental health; and maintaining good health for all through prevention and early intervention. To deliver this vision and priorities, even closer working relationships with local health, economic, housing and community teams and partnerships will be vital. This work has started in earnest with collaborative arrangements being put in place between the board and the Devon Sustainability and Transformation Partnership, the Devon Children and Families Partnership, the Devon Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Devon Partnership.

Healthcare Public Health

Population Health Management is an approach that improves the health of the population through data driven planning and delivery of proactive care to achieve maximum impact. It includes techniques such as risk stratification, segmentation and modelling to identify 'at risk' cohorts, and designs and targets interventions to improve population health and wellbeing, prevent mental and physical ill-health, improve care and support for people with ongoing health conditions, and reduce inequalities in health. A programme of work to establish the infrastructure for this work and embed intelligence-based approaches linked to new models of care and appropriate preventive interventions is being taken forward by the Devon

Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), with public health teams in Devon playing a pivotal role in shaping and developing the associated programme of work. Dr Virginia Pearson has been appointed as the STP System Director of Population Health working on behalf of the three local authority public health teams to provide leadership for the programme. The work is also supported by the Devon public health intelligence function, which has been both working to link data across local health organisations and local authorities and develop new techniques and approaches in relation to health intelligence. Embedding and developing Population Health Management approaches will form a core component of the STPs long-term plan, and local work will be accelerated through participation in a 20-week Population Health Management development programme next year.

Health Protection and Emergency Planning

The Health Protection Committee across the Peninsula and chaired by Dr Virginia Pearson provides assurance that the health protection system including screening, immunisation, flu planning, community infection prevention and control and environmental hazards are well planned for and help protect and improve the health of the local population.

The Devon Emergency Planning Partnership led by the Council now includes all the District Councils and Torbay and Plymouth and provides stronger resilience to our emergency planning capacity and capability.

Health improvement and reducing health inequalities

Public Health Services

On 1 April 2019 over 300 Public Health Nursing Staff (PHNS) successfully transferred into the Council to work within the Council's Children's Services. A 'lift and shift' model was adopted which meant staff and systems remained almost exactly as they had been and enabled a smooth transition for services, service users, and staff alike. However, there are challenges:

- The service is around 25% below its clinical staffing establishment, despite an on-going recruitment campaign. The Council is now focusing on 'growing our own workforce' with investment in training new Health Visitors and School Nurses in collaboration with the University of the West of England and Health Education England.
- The immediate impact of the staffing gaps is that overall performance hasn't yet recovered as we had hoped (it had declined during the last year of the previous contract), meaning a more targeted approach to the five nationally-mandated Health Visiting Reviews is having to be adopted across much of the county.
- ICT and data management issues in the first six months since transfer mean we have only limited information on many areas of performance currently, and even then the management information available is not considered wholly reliable.
- Financial challenges are on the horizon: the additional staff costs related to NHS pay, terms and conditions (a pay-rise and a steep rise in employers' pension contributions), and the costs of incorporating the PHNS workforce into DCC IT systems (purchasing a fit-for-purpose case management and reporting system), and developing robust clinical governance systems and processes all contribute to an anticipated financial pressure next year.

The Council is pursuing a collaborative transformation programme focused on realising the benefits of closer working with Children's Centres and other DCC services, but the level of change required will take time to achieve, leaving the service under pressure in the short to medium term.

“One Small Step” provides support for residents wanting to live healthier lives (stopping smoking, reducing alcohol consumption, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, and increasing physical activity). The service has been recommissioned under the same brand to combine specialist stop smoking support with the wider lifestyle service at reduced cost. The new provider is “Everyone Health”.

Partnership work with planning colleagues in both the County and District Councils continues to help ensure consideration to ensuring healthy places for example access to green space, active travel, play areas, local food and food growing, alongside well-planned health care facilities that support wellbeing. This work is complemented by close working with Active Devon and with the Local Nature Partnership, for example supporting the “Naturally Healthy May”, “Devon Girls Can”, “We Are Undefeatable” and “Connecting Actively to Nature” campaigns and programmes to support more people to be physically active.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an approach to supporting people’s well-being and there are now 23 MECC Healthy Conversation Skills trainers in the Devon County Council area. This year there have been 29 accredited MECC courses delivered reaching 293 people from a wide range of organisations.

On the 7 October 2019 the Council became the first Local Authority in the South West to sign up to the Healthy Weight Declaration for local authorities. The series of pledges are all designed to create healthier environments and to increase the accessibility of foods lower in fat, salt and sugar. The work-streams involve a whole Council approach; there are work-streams led by Trading Standards, Economy, Waste Management, Devon NORSE, Children Centres, Libraries and Public Health.

The Council received funding for £175,000 to expand and support the Suicide Bereavement and Support service (Pete’s Dragons) across the whole of Devon, including setting up a real time surveillance system across the County, ensuring support is offered to those affected by suicide as part of plans to improve mental health and emotional health and well-being.

Public Health is working closely with the Local Medical and Local Pharmaceutical Committees to explore how we will commission and contract public health services in GP practices and pharmacies in the future, given the opportunities offered by the new Primary Care Networks.

In substance misuse, EDP began direct delivery of clinical substance misuse services (previously provided by Devon Doctors) on 1st April. The Council is also exploring the benefit of using “single use kits” to reduce the amount of unused needle kits that are thrown away. There are particular pressures on the substance misuse budget arising from increases in the price of buprenorphine.

There are also cost pressures in our sexual health services. Commissioners are working with the provider to understand the reasons for increases in activity and to identify ways of managing both demand and cost.

Public Health also provides advice to our partners – especially the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group – and are linking increasingly into place-based work at locality level, providing demographic analysis and evidence-based input.

5. Economy, Enterprise and Skills - Head of Service: Keri Denton

The Economy, Enterprise and Skills Service has continued to support the local economy and to work with businesses. It has delivered skills and training opportunities and has provided a range of regulatory services and guidance through the joint Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards. Set out below are some of the highlights and achievements:

The Service has continued to deliver its primary adult and community learning programme through the year through Learn Devon, with 6,400 individuals engaged over the year,

representing a 20% increase, and 130 individuals supported to complete their GCSEs with achievement rates of over 80-90% compared to 35% nationally.

The Service has also continued the Council's Post-16 Transition programme, working with CSW Ltd to provide the Council's wraparound tracking and support provision for those young people moving from full time education into new opportunities. Tracking 22,000 young people in year, the programme saw historically low levels of NEETs in 2018 (just over 3% of the total), beating both regional and national averages.

Working with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, the service has rolled out the Careers Hub, working with all mainstream secondary schools across the County to support their emerging careers programmes and link together business and education partners. The Digital Skills Partnership has brought together a business led group of digital experts and enterprises to develop and enhance digital skills provision across the area. This includes the roll out from July of the Digital Innovation Fund Programme, providing 300 new training opportunities at a variety of levels for individuals wishing to upskill around digital competencies.

The Service is working through a range of projects to stimulate business growth and successfully securing external funding. The Service is in conversation with the LEP to operate the HotSW Growth Hub. The Service has also submitted bids for ERDF funding for a new Growth Support Programme to run alongside the Growth Hub, creating a single point of contact and a comprehensive source of business support including regulatory advice. The Service has secured funding for an Engaging Rural Micros trial project involving monitoring and practical research with over 250 rural micro businesses.

The joint Devon, Somerset & Torbay Trading Standards Service continues to perform strongly, meeting key operational targets and carrying out some major investigations. The Service has also focused on prevention and business support. Examples include, education campaign to tackle financial scams with specific action on educating younger people as they are increasingly becoming victims and a project was developed in partnership with the Property Ombudsman to provide business support and interventions to all letting agents in our service delivery area.

The Strategy for Growth which sets out the Service's strategic objectives until 2030 is nearing completion and the team has carried out a number of research projects to support the development of future projects. These include supporting the local industrial strategy, a Digital Strategy for Heart of the South West and commissioning a follow up study looking at the potential economic markets for good and services aimed at an ageing society.

The service has also led on the County Council's input in the "Connecting Devon and Somerset" programme which is successfully delivering new broadband services across North Western Devon. The recent decision to terminate the contracts with Gigaclear has been shared with Scrutiny and the work to develop a new procurement remains underway.

The service has continued with development, management and marketing of its industrial estate portfolio, including at Okehampton East Business Park, Mullacott Cross Industrial Estate in Ilfracombe, Duchy Square in Princetown and Roundswell South in Barnstaple.

At Roundswell South work continues to construct a new Enterprise Centre. At Okehampton 4 plots are sold and one in productive use, supporting approximately 100 jobs. We have interest in the remaining plots, half of which are currently under offer, with marketing of the final plots due to commence shortly.

The service continues to support the development of Exeter Science Park and has supported the Science Park on the development of the new University Vibration Simulator building and the new Open Innovation Building, as well as district heating infrastructure and ongoing landscape maintenance.

The service is also working on the future of our Skypark employment site, engaging with our JV partner St Modwen, East Devon District Council and Exeter Airport on opportunities and discussions around the site's Enterprise Zone status and future plans for a Local Development Order (LDO) to enable the site to be brought forward more simply in future from a planning viewpoint.

Dr Virginia Pearson
Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Policy, Corporate and Asset Management: Councillor John Hart

Cabinet Member for Resources Management: Councillor Stuart Barker

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Services and Cabinet Liaison for Exeter:
Councillor Andrew Leadbetter

Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis

Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills: Councillor Rufus Gilbert

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services:
Councillor Roger Croad

Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Digital Transformation: Councillor Barry Parsons

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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Nil